

Southern Africa Seasonal Monitor

WFP Regional Bureau Johannesburg



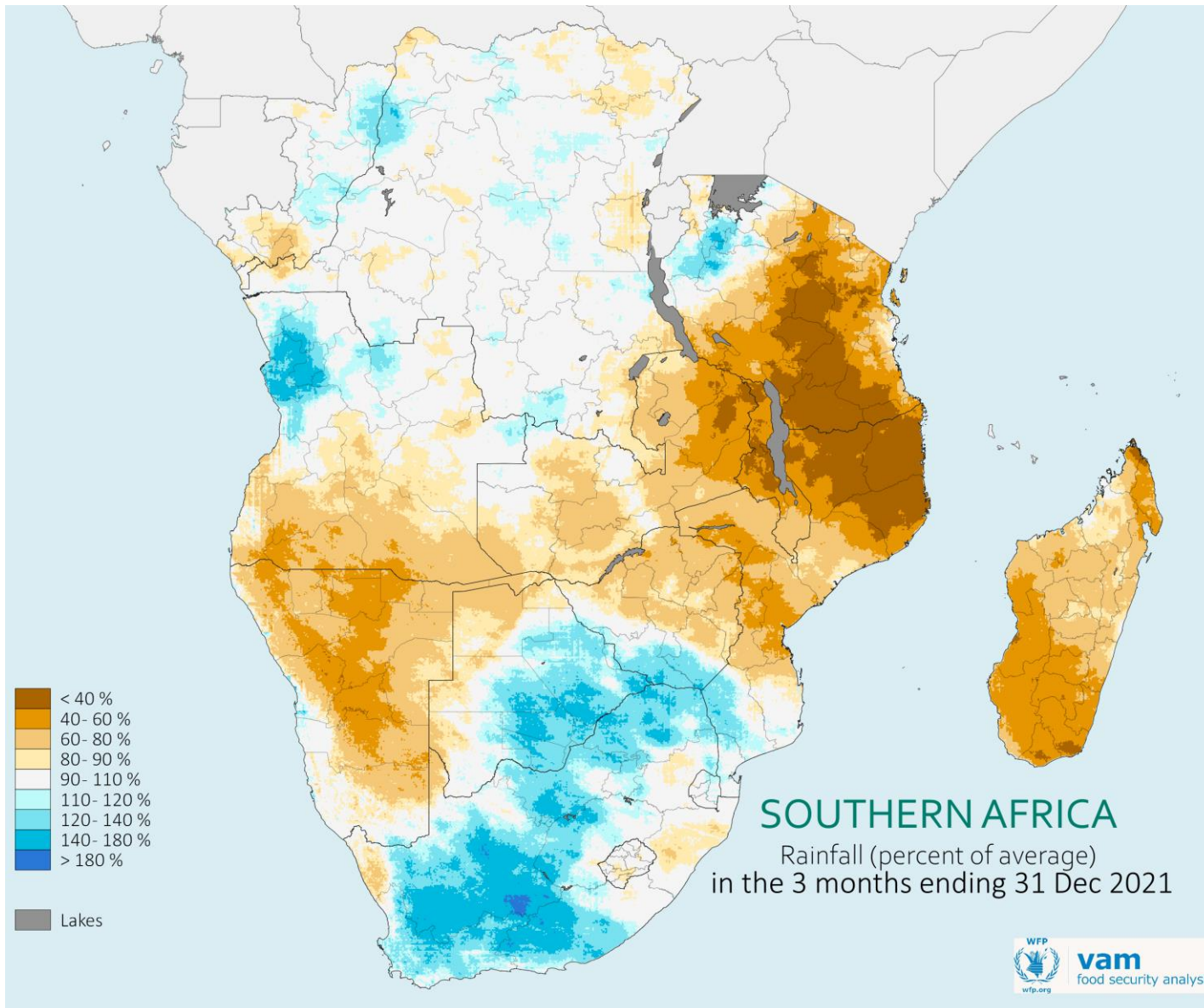
World Food
Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

January 2022

The Season So Far	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first stage of Southern Africa's 2021/22 season has been marked by drought conditions particularly in Madagascar, north and central Mozambique, Tanzania, Malawi and eastern Zambia. Southern Angola and Namibia are also affected.
Recent Developments	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The October-December 2021 period has been the driest or second driest since 1981 across areas of northern Mozambique, southern Tanzania, most of Malawi, southern Madagascar and the Angola-Namibia border.• These conditions led to delays in the start of the season of up to one month relative to the usual timing, accompanied by strongly below average vegetation development. Recovery is still possible, provided abundant and regular rains are received from January onwards and there is no early end to the rainfall season.
Impacts	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short range forecasts offer mixed perspectives. In mid-January, wetter than average conditions should be expected in the region except for Mozambique, Tanzania and Angola where dryness is expected to continue. The month is forecast to end drier than average across the region. Good consistent rainfall in February is fundamental to improve crop production prospects in many areas of the region. Current areas of concern include southern Madagascar, Mozambique-Tanzania and southern Angola-Namibia.
Outlook	7	
Areas of Concern	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seasonal forecasts for January-March point to near average conditions across the region, except for drier than average conditions in northwest Angola and above average rainfall in Tanzania. So far, the predictions have diverged from actual conditions.

THE SEASON SO FAR: October-December 2021



The first stage of Southern Africa's 2021/22 season has been marked by much drier than average conditions across much of the region, except for South Africa, most of Botswana and southern Zimbabwe, where wetter than usual conditions dominated.

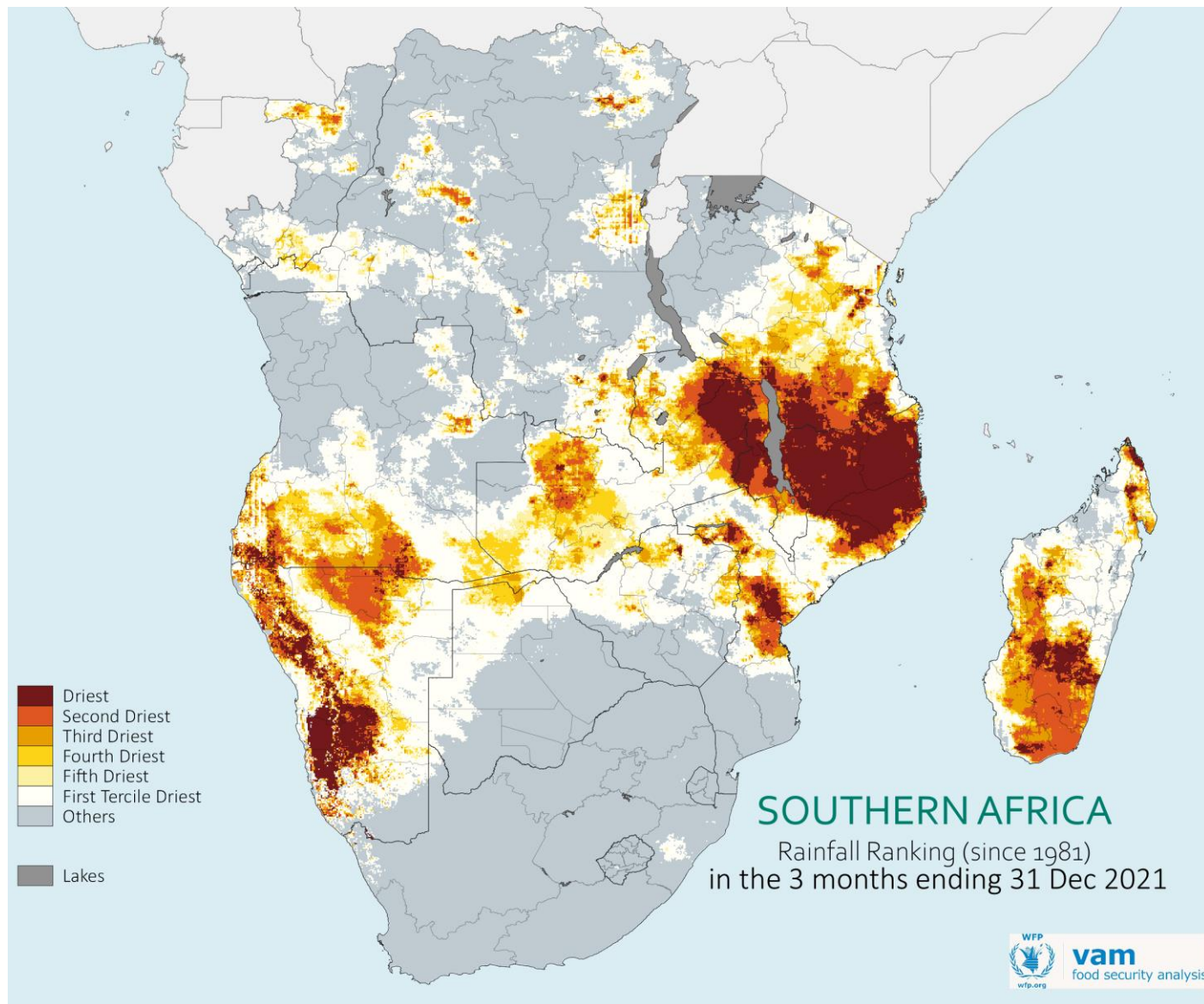
Very dry conditions have affected Madagascar, northern and central Mozambique, Tanzania, Malawi, eastern and central Zambia and central and northern Zimbabwe. Southern Angola and Namibia are also affected.

These drought situations are more extreme in northern Mozambique, southern Tanzania, Malawi and neighbouring areas of Zambia as well as Madagascar; some of these regions have received as little as 30% of the usual amounts.

These developments go counter to the predictions of most seasonal forecasts, and historical tendencies which pointed to wetter than average conditions during this period.

*Rainfall in October to December 2021 as a proportion of the long-term average.
Blues for above average conditions, oranges and browns for below average conditions.*

THE SEASON SO FAR: Overview of Dry Extremes



Some areas of the Southern African region have been hit by extreme drought conditions during the early part of the 2021-2022 season (Oct-Dec 2021).

The extreme nature of the early season drought is made evident by mapping the rainfall amount in this period as ranks in the 40 year-long record.

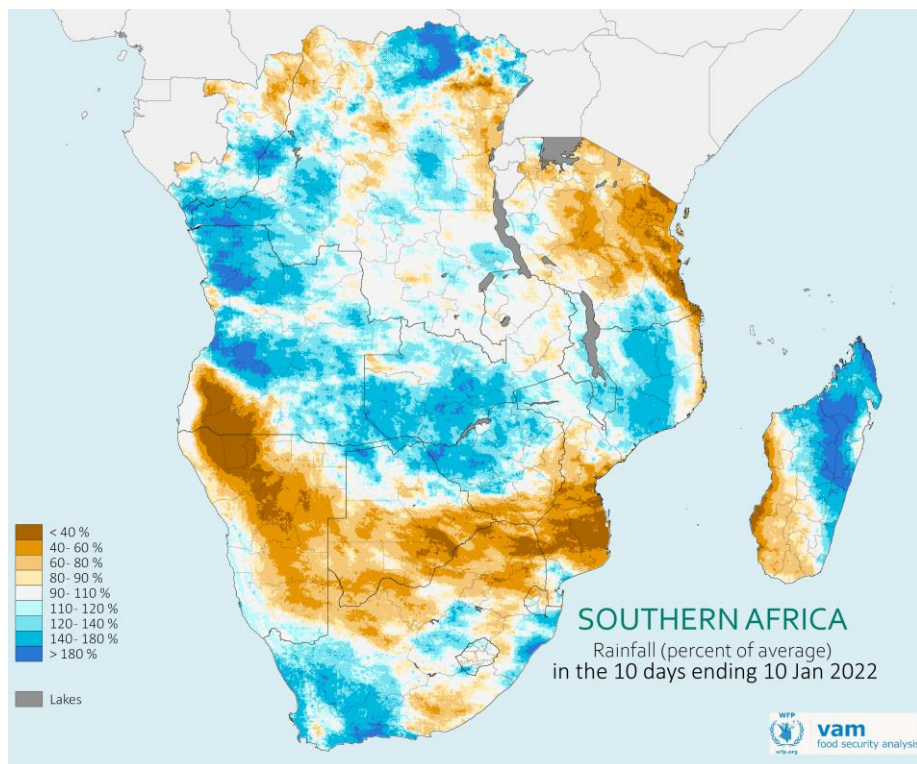
The map shows that for the northern third of Mozambique, southern Tanzania, most of Malawi, southern Madagascar and the Angola-Namibia border, the October-December 2021 period has been the driest or second driest since 1981 (dark brown and orange colours).

In some areas such as southern Madagascar and southern Angola, these drought conditions have recurred for the past three years or so. This drought recurrence has increased the vulnerability of local populations – continuation of these patterns will lead to even higher food insecurity levels.

In northern Mozambique, the current drought is consistent with a long-term trend of decreasing October-December rainfall. In this region, drought impacts can interact with conflict to increase the complexity of the humanitarian situation in the region.

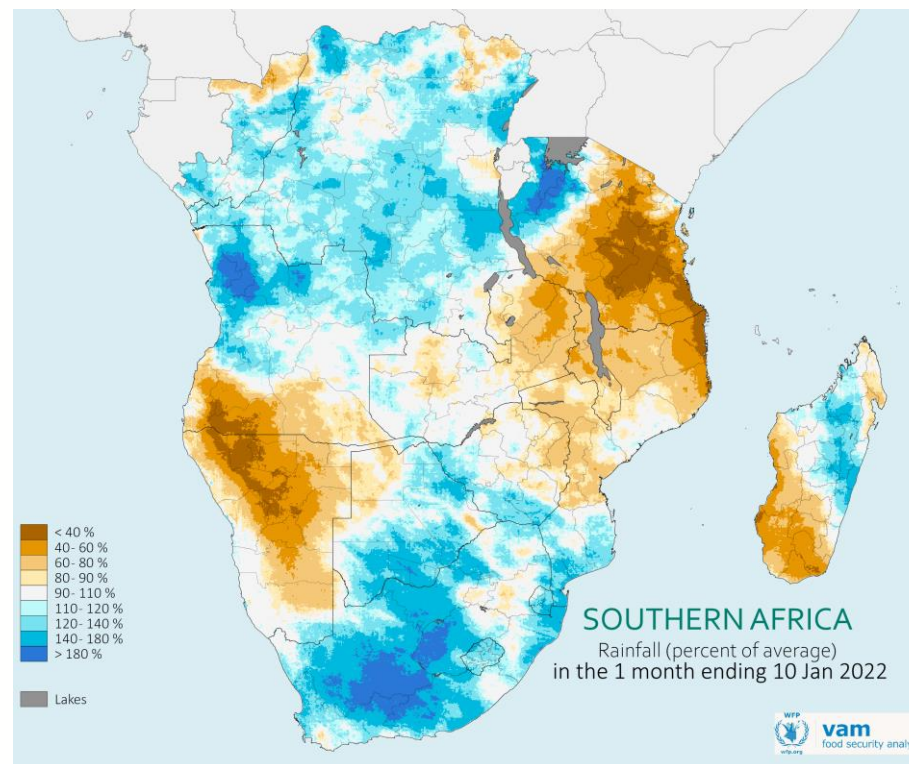
Rainfall in October-December 2021 as a rank in the long-term historical record (1981-2020): Only dry extremes are represented: Dark brown – driest ever OND rainfall, orange – second driest, dark yellow – third driest, etc.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS



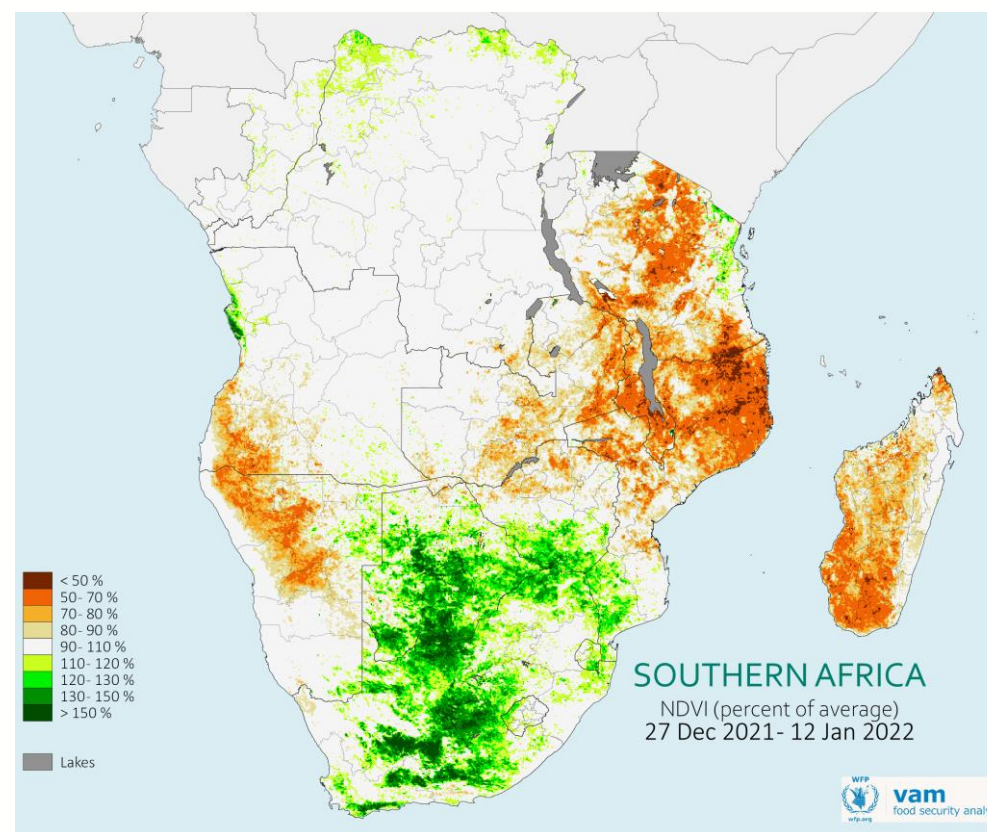
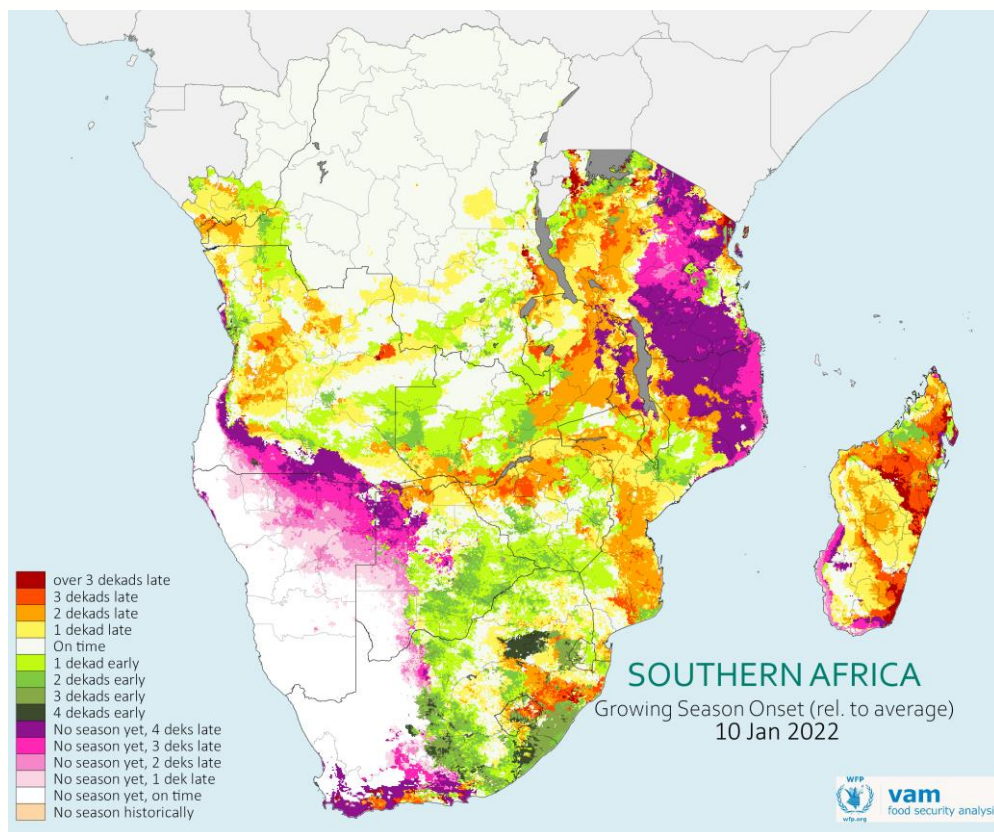
In early January 2022, wetter than average conditions spread across from RoC and Angola to Zambia, most of Zimbabwe, Malawi and northern Mozambique and north and eastern Madagascar (map left). These good rains helped to slightly improve conditions in areas which had been suffering from early season drought.

In contrast, very dry conditions prevailed over a large region from SW Angola and Namibia to southern Botswana, southern Zimbabwe, southern Mozambique, northeastern South Africa and Eswatini; dry conditions also continued in Tanzania and southwestern Madagascar (map left).



While monthly rainfall deficits decreased across Zambia, Malawi, and parts of central and north Mozambique (map right), conditions remain drier than average. This is particularly the case in Tanzania, southern Madagascar and Namibia and the border areas with Angola, although heavy rainfall has also been reported in north eastern Namibia since January.

The delayed onset of substantial rains and build-up of below normal soil moisture in many of these areas led to very poor conditions for planting and early crop or pasture development. Recovery is possible if rainfall continues to improve, otherwise, agricultural performance in the 2021/22 season may be compromised.



Left: Variations in the onset of growing season conditions relative to the long-term average.

Greens where onset has been earlier than usual. Reds and oranges where onset has been later than usual. Pink shades where onset is delayed and has not yet taken place.

Right: Vegetation cover in mid-December compared with the long-term average.

Green shades for above average vegetation, orange shades for below average vegetation.

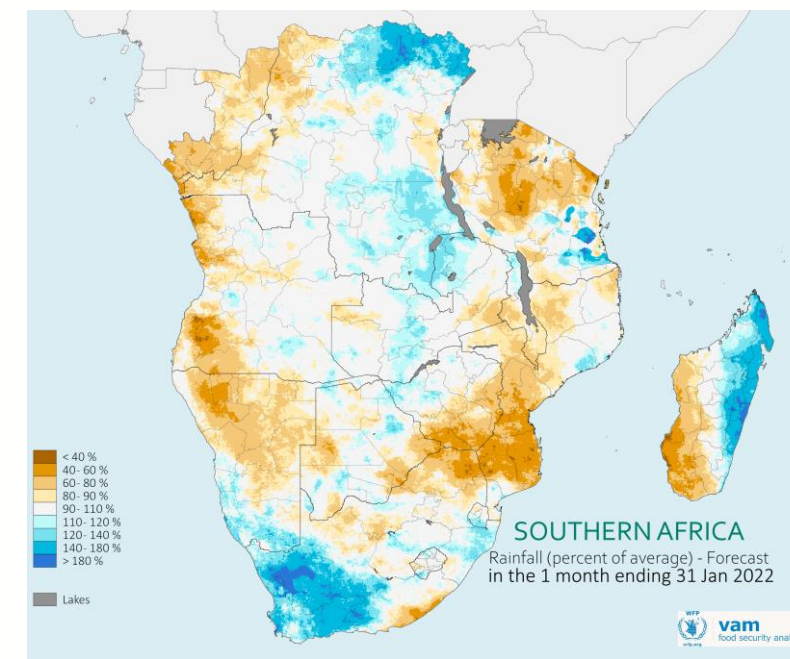
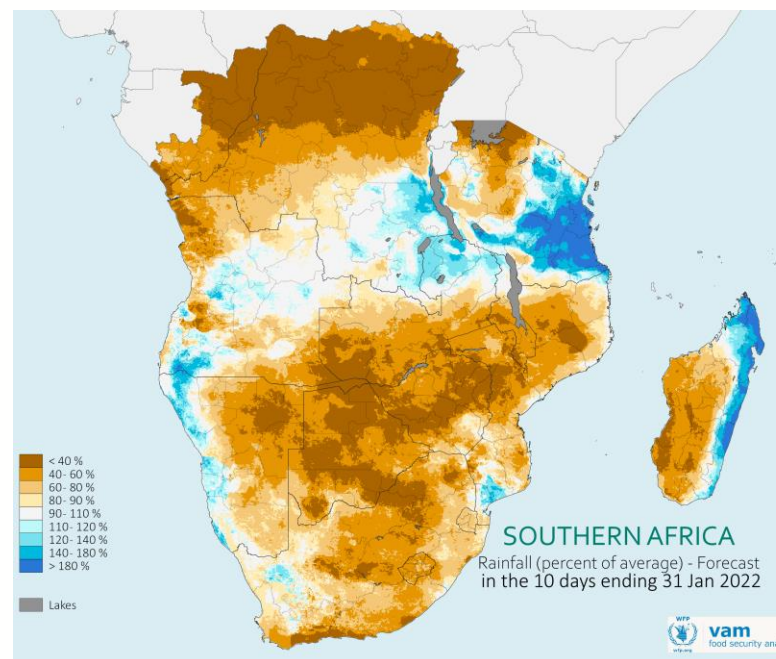
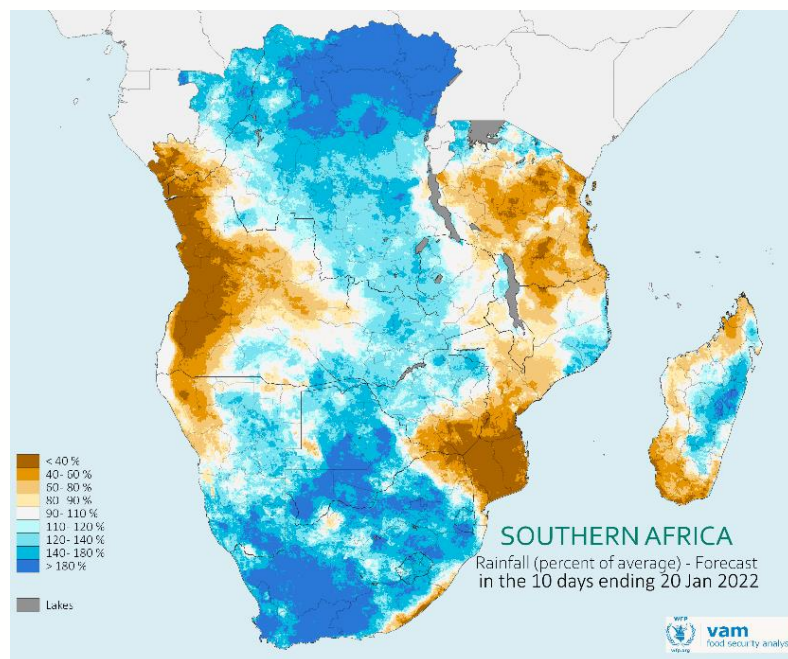
Date of start of the growing season is defined as the occurrence of enough rainfall to satisfy a standard water requirement of an emerging crop for two consecutive 10-day periods.

The anomaly in the start of the growing season reflects the Oct-Dec rainfall patterns: significant delays in the availability of moisture for planting and early crop development are visible in Madagascar, south and central Mozambique, and eastern Zambia. In many areas of Malawi, northern Mozambique, southern Tanzania and in some areas in Angola-Namibia border the season has not started yet and is over 5 weeks late.

Early season vegetation development shows significant and widespread delays across the regions where rainfall deficits have been most pronounced. This provides clear indication of the extensive negative impacts of the early season drought described before.

Where rainfall patterns have been favourable, the opposite impact is noted, i.e. well above average vegetation cover. In Eswatini, increased rainfall led to localised flooding and soil leaching in some areas.

SHORT RANGE OUTLOOK: January 2022



Above: forecasted rainfall in 11-20 January (left), 21-31 January (middle) and 1-31 January 2022 (right) compared to average.

Good rains were forecast for mid-January across most of the region, except for southern Zimbabwe, most of Mozambique, Tanzania and southern Madagascar. Angola is also forecast to remain drier than usual (map left).

For late January, forecasts point to a return to drier than average conditions across most of the region, except for southern Tanzania (map middle).

A combined forecast product to the end of January then indicates drier than average conditions on a monthly basis in southwest Angola, southern Zimbabwe and Mozambique as well as western and southern Madagascar. On the other hand, conditions may get closer to normal in the rest of Angola, Zambia, Malawi, northern Zimbabwe and parts of northern Mozambique.

However, if the forecast materializes, the expected distribution is fairly irregular even in the areas that may get close to the normal monthly amounts.

Given the very dry early stage of the season and prospects for a drier end of January that might signal a return to drier than average conditions, the early perspectives for the performance of the agricultural season are not very optimistic in particular for southern Madagascar, parts of Mozambique, Tanzania, southern Angola and parts of Namibia.

Good prospects hinge on good reliable rainfall at least through February.

LONG RANGE OUTLOOK: January-March 2022

C3S multi-system seasonal forecast

ECMWF/Met Office/Météo-France/CMCC/DWD/NCEP/JMA/ECCC

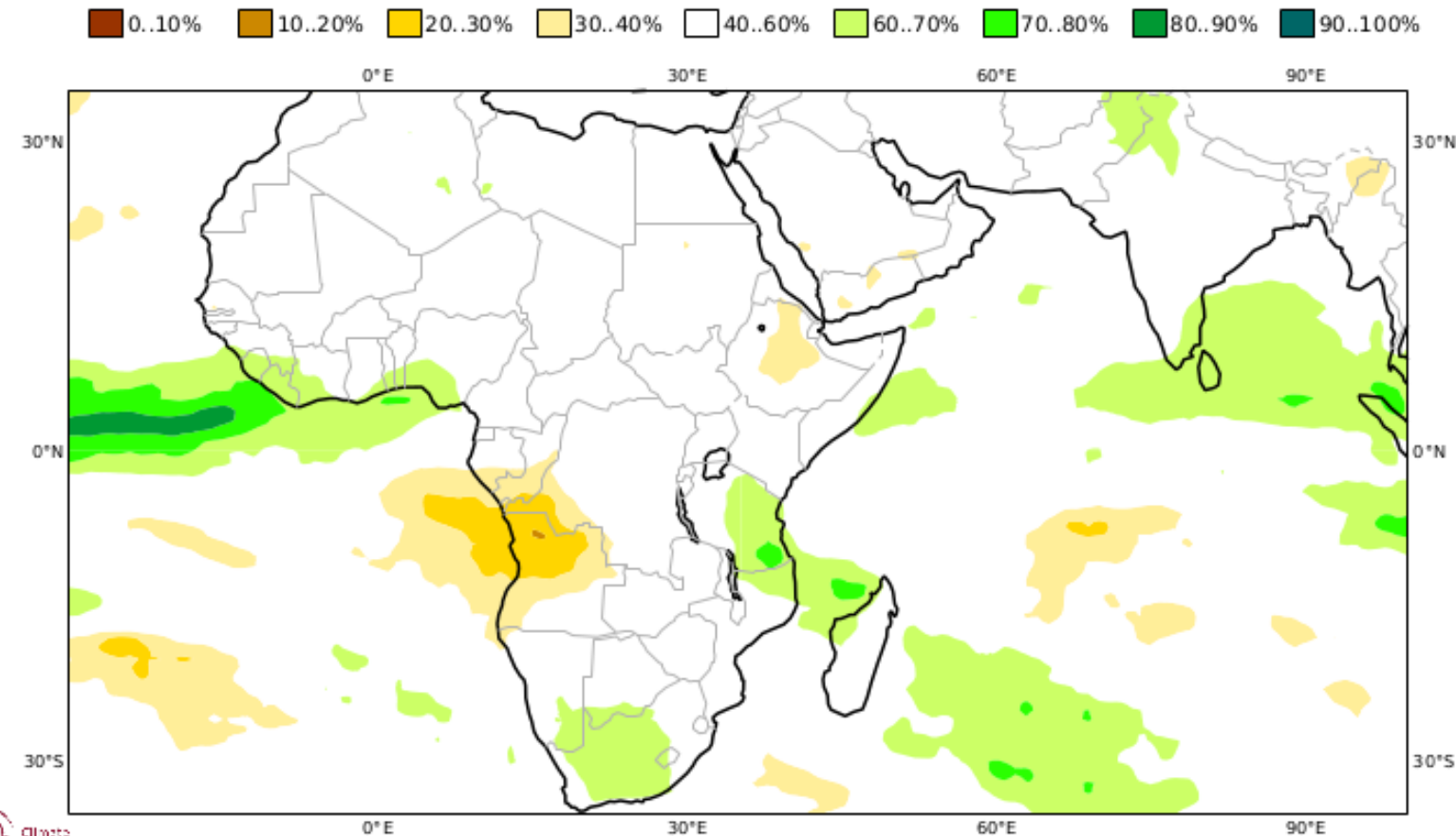
Prob(precipitation > median)

JFM 2022

Nominal forecast start: 01/12/21

Unweighted mean

Probability of JFM rainfall being above usual from C3S multi-system seasonal forecast, issued Dec. 2021

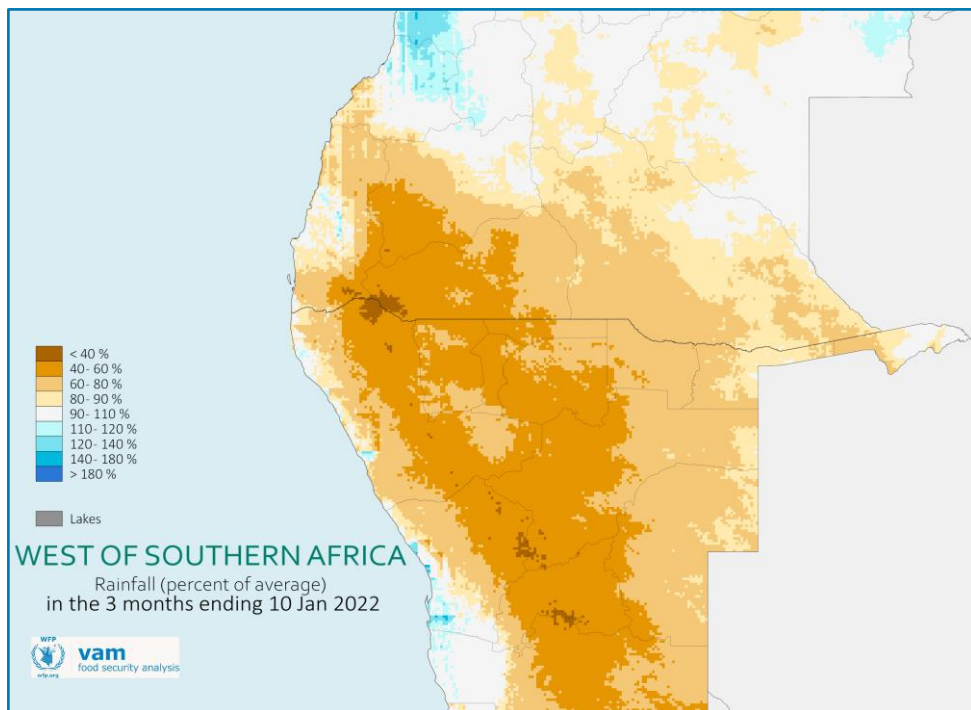


The C3S multi-system seasonal forecast issued in December points to average January-March 2022 rainfall across most of southern Africa.

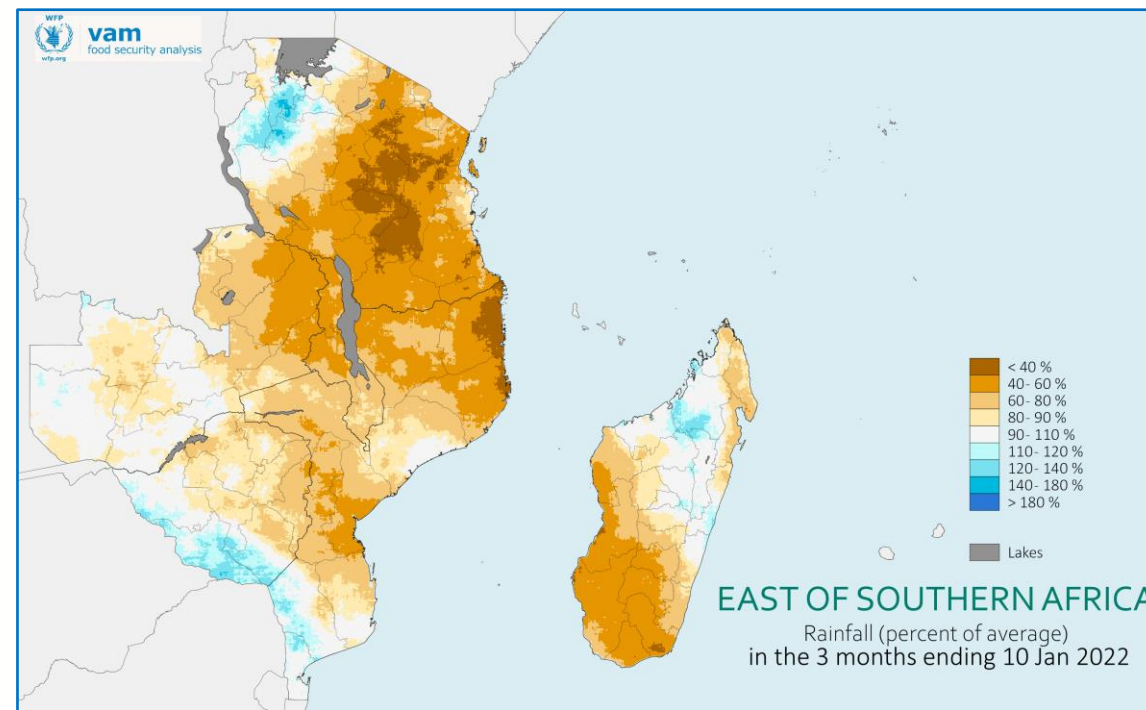
Of the areas experiencing dryness thus far, only parts of southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique are forecast to see above average rainfall. Drier than average conditions are forecast for Angola.

This is a more pessimistic outlook than the August 2021 SARCOF outlook. The early season dryness was also missed by nearly all seasonal forecasts sources, so the above outlook may need to be considered carefully.

AREAS OF CONCERN



The main planting season ends in January for most countries in the region, thus the next few weeks are the last window for planting. If the rainfall situation continues to improve in some areas, there is still possibility for agricultural performance to recover in the 2021/22 season. In Zimbabwe, planting/replanting continued in areas which received effective rainfall and crop conditions improved in the last dekad of December. Close monitoring of rainfall performance is needed as the season progresses, as well as potential impacts of locust outbreaks in South Africa.



Southern Madagascar, which has seen consecutive years of drought remains a key area of concern. As of September 2021, multiple markets in the south were reporting shortage of local rice, maize and dry cassava due to early depletion of stocks following a poor harvest. Consecutive years of dryness and poor cropping have also pushed households in southern Angola to extreme vulnerability, and poor rainfall this year will exacerbate the impacts on crops, forage and livestock. In northern Mozambique drought impacts can interact with conflict exacerbating the humanitarian situation.

Seasonal progress in these two areas will be closely monitored.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

RBj VAM

Climate and Earth
Observation Team

Andrew Odero

andrew.odero@wfp.org

Mina Suzuki

mina.suzuki@wfp.org

Rogério Bonifácio

rogerio.bonifacio@wfp.org

Khumo Mogapi

khumo.mogapi@wfp.org

Giancarlo Pini

giancarlo.pini@wfp.org



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food security analysis

